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Early School Experiences and the Development of Self-Esteem

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EARLY SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-ESTEEM

by

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VITA

The author, Anita S. Ugent, was born on March 21, 1946, in Rochester, New York. She is the daughter of Sol and Mary (Zalomek) Marine. She was married to Warren D. Ugent on March 14, 1968, and is the mother of one daughter, Cari Lynn, aged three.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The self-concept and, more specifically, self-esteem are considered as important constructs in most personality theories. Self-esteem, the evaluative attitudes which the individual holds toward himself as an object, has been assumed to develop as a result of 1.) successes and failures experienced while interacting with the environment, and 2.) reflected appraisals of significant others. Once developed, self-esteem becomes stabilized prior to middle childhood. However, very little research has been conducted on the young child during the time this development of self-esteem is taking place.

Self-esteem has been shown to be related to school experiences and may possibly even be a causal factor in determining academic achievement. However, these relationships have been shown to exist in older children and relatively little is known about how school experiences are related to the development of self-esteem in young school-aged children.

Several questions concerning the development of self-esteem remain as yet unanswered. Self-esteem is developed and is stabilized before middle childhood, but

when, and even more important, exactly how? Experiences of success and failure contribute to forming a self-image, but how influential are academic successes and failures? Furthermore, what constitutes a success or failure--actual objective progress or lack of progress in learning and/or labeled placement in an achievement level? Does experienced success or failure in learning provide the basis for establishing self-esteem or do previously established self-appraisals facilitate or impede learning?

Attitudes of "significant others" contribute to the establishing of self-esteem, but when does this happen and who is "significant"? Parents are probably "significant", but is anyone who the child encounters at school? Are elementary school teachers, who spend six hours a day with the children, influential enough to be "significant"? Do peer opinions during the early school years exert enough influence to be considered "significant"?

A child enters school with an abundance of past experiences--with previous successes and failures and with previous opinions of others toward him. While in school, he encounters academic successes and failures and the evaluative attitudes of his teacher and peers. How does he incorporate these experiences into a stable concept of the self with a relatively unchanging level of self-esteem? And when does this happen? In what way does he assimilate and accommodate

his ongoing experiences with his present concept of self and at what point does this process stabilize?

When studying the development of self-esteem, an additional area of consideration arises--sex differences. Boys and girls are treated differently by their peers, their teachers and their parents. Their records of academic achievement are different. Their rates of development and maturation are different. Their expectations are different. Considering all these differences, do their self-esteems differ? Do their experiences in relationship to their self-esteems differ? Can any differences be discerned at an early age?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study proposes to investigate the development of self-esteem in relationship to the early school experiences of success and failure and to the evaluative attitudes of primary grade teachers and peers. Successes and failures will be looked upon as both objectively measured achievement and as subjectively labeled group level. Furthermore, these two measurements of achievement will be separately examined according to reading and math achievement, the two most important areas of learning in the primary grades.

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Systematic answers to all the as yet unanswered questions could offer countless implications for early childhood education. If it is proven that early school experiences contribute a great deal to the formation of stable self-esteem, then primary grade teachers and administrators could be made more aware of the types of experiences which are most beneficial to the formation of positive self-esteem. In addition to promoting positive self-esteem, knowledge of the developmental mechanisms may also aid in raising the self-esteem of a child with a low opinion of himself, so that through a concentration on remedial self-esteem development it may be possible to increase the level of self-esteem.

Much has been postulated about early experiences and their influence on the later existing self-esteem. However, little examination has taken place of the child as he actually goes through the experiences while developing his self-esteem. It is necessary to look at the child during his early school years and even before entering school. The present study will attempt to look at a brief period of the unexplored span of the development of self-esteem.

Since the mechanisms involved in the development of self-esteem have been studied through post-hoc investigations,

it is important that commonly accepted theories be investigated during the actual times they are thought to occur.

To thoroughly investigate this problem a longitudinal study starting before children enter school and proceeding through the primary grades should be undertaken. However, before beginning such an intensive investigation, it is necessary to first pave the way by looking at one segment of this time span. Also, adequate testing devices for young children have not yet been devised and it is necessary to adapt existing measuring devices or to develop new devices before undertaking a long-term study.

The present study will focus on one segment of the early school years--second grade. This level was selected because, although it is part of the early school years, it is close enough to the middle grades so that adaptation of existing testing devices would appear to be successful. At this age, children have learned enough skills in following directions and reading simple words to be able to complete simple inventory tests, especially if these tests are read to them orally.

STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES

Based on previous assumptions, the following hypotheses may be formulated:

1.) Since positive experiences would promote feelings of self-worth, it would be expected that children with high academic achievement in the early grades would also have high self-esteem, and, on the other hand, children with low academic achievement would have low self-esteem.

2.) Since positive interactions with significant others would promote positive self-evaluations in young children, it would be expected that:

a) Children who are liked by their primary grade teacher would have high self-esteem, whereas those who are disliked would have low self-esteem and

b) Children who are liked by their peers in early elementary school would have high self-esteem, whereas those who are disliked would have low self-esteem.

From these expectations the following null hypotheses may be generated:

1.) Self-esteem does not vary among subjective reading placement levels in second graders.

2.) Self-esteem does not vary among subjective math placement levels in second graders.

3.) Self-esteem is not related to objective reading achievement in second grade.

4.) Self-esteem is not related to objective math achievement in second grade.

5.) Self-esteem is not related to the teacher's attitude toward the second grade student.

6.) Self-esteem is not related to the popularity among peers in second graders.

Each hypothesis will also be examined for sex differences.

FORMAT OF THE STUDY

In summary, self-esteem is considered to be developed during the early years as a result of experiences of success and failure and of opinions of others. To date, investigation of these phenonema during the early school years has not yet been undertaken. The present study will focus on the second grader's self-esteem in relation to his reading and math achievement, his teacher's opinion toward him and his peers' attitude toward him.

In addition to Chapter I Introduction, the remaining chapters will proceed as follows:

Chapter II--Review of the Literature

- History of the Study of Self-esteem
- Definition and Description of Sef-esteem
- Developmental Aspects of Self-esteem
- Scholastic Achievement and Self-esteem
- Social Relationships and Self-esteem
- Sex Differences in Self-esteem
- Self-esteem Measuring Devices

Chapter III--Method and Procedure

Chapter IV-- Results and Discussion

Chapter V-- Summary

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of the literature reveals numerous investigations focussing on the self-concept and, more specifically, on self-esteem. The present chapter will trace the study of self-esteem from the early works of William James to the present. After a general description and definition of self-esteem, literature concerning the development of self-esteem will be discussed. Next, the study of self-esteem and school-related variables of achievement and social relationships will be explored. Finally, findings on sex differences in self-esteem and a consensus on self-esteem measuring instruments will be reviewed.

HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF SELF-ESTEEM

Discussions of self-esteem date back to the early writings of William James, who concluded that human aspirations and values have an essential role in determining whether we regard ourselves favorably. According to James, if our achievement approaches our aspirations, the result is high self-esteem; on the other hand, if a wide divergence exists, we then regard ourselves poorly. Thus, self-esteem = (equals) $\frac{\text{actualities (success)}}{\text{supposed potentialities (pretentions)}}$. (Coopersmith, 1967)

Both G. H. Mead and H. S. Sullivan agreed that self-esteem is made up of "reflected appraisals", i.e., appraisals of the individual made by parents and significant others. Sullivan also felt that the individual continually guards himself against the losing of self-esteem, for such a loss produces feelings of distress or anxiety (Dreyer and Haupt, 1968).

Other neo-Freudians, such as K. Horney and A. Adler, focused strongly on the interpersonal processes in the development of self-esteem. Horney proposed the formation of an "idealized image", which plays an important role in how the individual evaluates himself. Adler, however, put great stress on the actual weaknesses in behaviors which produce low self-esteem. He saw resulting feelings of inferiority

as an inevitable experience during childhood for every individual (Coopersmith, 1967).

Erik Erikson (1950) saw the dimension of self-esteem developing between the ages of seven and eleven, where the child is experiencing the crisis of Industry vs. Inferiority. At this time the child looks to his peers as models for behavior. As a result of these modeling experiences, evaluations of the self emerge as positive or negative feelings of worth.

Carl Rogers (1951) proposed that all persons develop a self-image which then serves to guide and maintain their adjustment to the external world. An early development in Rogers' theory is when "a portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self" (p. 497). The structure of the self forms "as a result of interaction with the environment and particularly as a result of evaluational interaction with others" (p. 498). The self becomes a "conceptual pattern of perceptions with attached values." These values are either experienced directly by the individual or are adopted from others and distortedly are perceived as if they had been experienced directly. "Most ways of behaving which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of self" (p. 507). Thus, a child will develop a higher self-esteem if he has parents and significant others who accept his views and values, though

they need not agree with him.

Rogers postulated three unifying concepts which are basic to self-esteem. First, there is the need for positive regard by others, in which the individual seeks the esteem of others more so than the experiences valued by the individual himself. As a result of reinforcement or frustration of this need, the individual acquires the need for self-regard, which functions independently of interpersonal relationships. Finally, the individual acquires conditions of worth, defined as conditions "which help the person to avoid or find self-experiences that are less or more worthy of self-regard" (Hall and Lindzey, 1957, p. 489).

In contrast to Rogers' "knowing self" (Lowe, 1968), A. Maslow (1954) sees the self as a motivator. Maslow's organismic theory of human motivation consists of a need hierarchy of five levels, in which the order of the needs signifies both the order of appearance in development and also the order in which the needs must be satisfied. The lower needs, comprised of physiological and safety needs, must be met before the emergence of the belongingness and love needs, the esteem needs and the self-actualization needs.

According to Maslow (1954), in the progression of the development of self-esteem, the person first "will hunger for affectionate relations with other people in general,

namely, for a place in his group, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal" (p. 89). Once the person has established relationships with others, he will seek both self-esteem and the esteem of others. Self-esteem cannot be based solely on the opinions of others, but rather, it must be based on real competence and adequacy. In other words, healthy self-esteem must be based on deserved respect. Maslow found that high self-esteem includes self-confidence, poise, unembarrassability and the lack of timidity and shyness. If esteem needs are thwarted, the resulting discouragement may lead to compensatory or neurotic trends. A person who develops both adequate self-esteem and esteem of others will then be able to assert himself, so that he may realize the full potentialities within himself.

Recently, investigators have attempted to empirically study and measure self-esteem. One of the most comprehensive studies has been conducted by S. Coopersmith (1967), who defines "the self" as "an abstraction that an individual develops about the attributes, capacities, objects and activities which he possesses and pursues" (p. 20). These abstractions are developed as a result of self-referent experiences on the basis of observations made by the individual of his behavior and the responses of other individuals to him. This concept of self, once developed, remains relatively constant.

DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF SELF-ESTEEM

Coopersmith (1959) acknowledges that "self-esteem is an ephemeral subject difficult to deal with empirically" (p. 93), and that a clarifying definition is essential.

Silber and Tippet (1965) define self-esteem as referring to feelings of satisfaction a person has about himself which reflect the relationship between the self-image and the ideal self-image. Thus, "by studying the relationship of different measures of self-esteem, we can conclude that we are assessing a common factor and one which can be distinguished from a concept which is concerned with another aspect of the self-image" (p. 1050).

According to Coopersmith (1967), the self-concept is multi-dimensional and self-esteem is one of its dimensions. He, along with Rosenberg (1965), defines self-esteem as evaluative attitudes (approval or disapproval) which the individual holds toward himself as an object in terms of being capable, significant, successful and worthy. These self-evaluative attitudes may be conscious or unconscious and may be expressed subjectively and behaviorally.

Coopersmith (1967) concluded that self-esteem "appears to have ramifying consequences that vitally affect the manner in which the individual responds to himself and the outside world" (p. 71).

Children with the highest measured mean self-evaluation also were frequently chosen as friends, had a small discrepancy between what they rated as their ideal self and what they rated as their present self, and had slightly above average achievement test scores (Coopersmith, 1959). It was also found that a "positive stable self-esteem is associated with subjective happiness, stability and soundness" (Coopersmith, 1962, p. 62), and is related to effectiveness in meeting environmental demands.

In a later study, Coopersmith (1969), using experimental laboratory tests, clinical tests and parental evaluations, formulated descriptions of children possessing various levels of self-esteem.

Children with high self-esteem were seen to be active, expressive, and successful both academically and socially. They led discussions, expressed opinions, did not avoid disagreements, and were freer and more original in creativity. They were not sensitive to criticism, self-conscious or personally preoccupied. They were interested in public affairs, showed little destructiveness or feelings of anxiety, and trusted their own perceptions and reactions. They were confident of being successful, held high aspirations, expected to be well received, and thus, had an optimistic attitude resulting from well-founded assessments of their abilities, social skills and personal qualities. In addition, they

reported less psychosomatic troubles such as headaches, fatigue, insomnia and intestinal upset.

Children with medium self-esteem were similar to those with high self-esteem except that they showed the strongest support of middle-class values and compliance to norms. Thus, they showed dependency on social acceptance, which they sought because of uncertainties of self-worth.

Children with low self-esteem were seen to be discouraged and depressed. They felt isolated, unloved and incapable of expressing or defending themselves. They held low aspirations which they often did not meet. They were too weak to confront or overcome their deficiencies, were afraid of angering others and shrank from notice, listening rather than participating. They also were sensitive to criticism, self-conscious and preoccupied with their inner problems which resulted in isolation, thus depriving themselves of friendly relationships needed for support.

Likewise, children with the lowest measured mean self-evaluation also were evaluated by their teachers as having the lowest self-esteem, were the least chosen as friends by their peers, had the lowest scores on achievement tests, displayed high Manifest Anxiety scores, had the lowest ratings of their ideal selves, and had low achievement motivation scores (Coopersmith, 1959). Furthermore, it was found that "negative, or unstable, self-esteem is correlated with

anxiety, instability and emotional disorder" (Coopersmith, 1962, P. 62).

People with low self-esteem generally withdraw from others and exhibit feelings of distress, tension and high levels of negative affect (Coopersmith, 1967).

Coopersmith (1969) concluded that an individual gauges his worth by the achievements he accomplishes and by the treatment he receives in his own interpersonal environment. Children with high self-esteem were found to have a close relationship with their parents, who showed an interest in their welfare, were concerned about their companions and were available for discussion of their problems. These parents participated in congenial joint activities with their children who were regarded as significant people inherently worthy of deep interest. Discipline in these families was less permissive. High standards of behavior were demanded and these parents were strict and consistent in enforcing rules, but used rewards rather than punitive measures. Thus, these families were democratic with the parents acting as benevolent despots and respecting their children's views. In addition, these parents presented their children with challenges to their capacities and led them to appreciate the reaching of their strengths. In contrast, parents of low self-esteem children failed to exhibit many

of the foregoing characteristics. They were seen to be very permissive and to use harsh punishments.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF SELF-ESTEEM

Coopersmith (1967) suggested that "at some time preceding middle childhood the individual arrives at a general appraisal of his worth, which remains relatively stable and enduring over a period of several years" (p. 5). Engel (1959), in measuring the self-concept of adolescents, also concluded that "crystallization of the self concept is achieved earlier in development" (p. 212). Felker and Stanwyck (1971) claimed that evidence has shown the self-concept to remain relatively stable as early as the third grade.

William and Cole (1968) theorize that "perhaps the child's conception of school is primarily an extension of his conception of himself already well established prior to entering school" (p. 480). Soares and Soares (1970) discovered that both advantaged and disadvantaged children's self-concepts were lower in high school than they had been in elementary school. However, Ugent (1971) found no difference among the self-esteem of lower middle-class children in the fourth, seventh and tenth grades, holding academic achievement constant, and Kimball (1972), using a representative sample of 8000, found no differences in self-esteem among fourth through eighth graders.

According to Wylie (1961), previous studies which have tested the stability of the self-concept by experimentally inducing success or failure have assumed that, in predicting behavior, a person's level of self-regard is of great importance; and, that this level of self-regard is acquired through learning as a result of a combination of rewards and punishments for one's actions and characteristics. Therefore, the person learns about himself through success or failure in manipulating the physical environment and from the way others react toward him. Wylie also reported that the majority of these studies found that adult Ss will, under certain conditions, change their self-evaluations in relation to a particular task or characteristic after experimentally induced success or failure. However, global self-regard "seems to be affected little, if any, by a single experimental failure or evaluation" (p. 198). Similarly, Coopersmith (1967) concluded that continued persistent mistreatment or lack of successes are required to produce long-term, negative self-evaluations.

Various aspects have been found by Coopersmith (1967) which are seen to contribute to the development of evaluative attitudes toward the self. Self-esteem has been found to be significantly associated with early childhood experiences and parental characteristics, attitudes and treatment. The four factors contributing to the development of self-esteem have

been found to be: 1.) the amount of respectful, accepting and concerned treatment received; 2.) the history of success; 3.) the values and aspirations used to interpret experiences; and 4.) the manner of responding to devaluation. Likewise, self-esteem is significantly related to the individual's basic style of adapting to environmental demands.

Coopersmith's (1967) results suggest that "psychological bases of esteem are more dependent on close, personal relationships and the immediate environment than upon material benefits or prestige rankings in the community at large" (p. 86). He found indirect indications that, in children, domination, rejection, and severe punishment result in lowered self-esteem. Thus, these children with low self-esteem have fewer experiences of love and success and they tend to become either submissive and withdrawn, which may result in low school achievement, or aggressive and dominant, which may result in school behavior problems. Likewise, these children are unlikely to be realistic and effective in everyday functioning and are more likely to "manifest deviant behavior patterns" (p. 4).

According to Wylie (1961), studies have shown low self-regard to be considered as "indicative of, or an aspect of, or perhaps even a cause of 'maladjustment" (p. 203). People with low self-esteem were found to have a shifting

and unstable self-concept, and thus, experience excessive anxiety (Rosenberg, 1965).

Engel (1959) found that adolescents who persisted in maintaining negative self-concepts over a period of two years were significantly less well adjusted as indicated by the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory adjustment measures. Adolescents who showed less regard for themselves after the two-year retest also shifted toward significantly more maladjustment, and those who gained in self-regard shifted toward significantly better adjustment.

A significant relationship was reported (Coopersmith, 1967) between low self-esteem and frequent or serious emotional difficulties. Coopersmith (1962) also found a high potential for psychopathology in children with either low self-esteem or with discrepant self-esteem, i.e., those who behave incongruently with how they evaluate themselves. This finding suggests two types of children who may become a classroom problem: 1.) most commonly, the child with low self-esteem who exhibits attention-seeking, aggressive behavior; and, 2.) occasionally the child who defensively evaluates himself high while his experiences include mainly frustrations and failures.

However, Ugent (1971), using Coopersmith's SEI, was unable to differentiate the self-esteem of children labeled by their teachers as behavior problems from other children

who were functioning at the same level of achievement. High achievers, the group with the highest mean self-esteem were rarely cited as behavior problems, which agrees with Ludwig (1970) who found that high self-concept is associated with low overt aggression.

Rosenberg (1965) concluded that "the feeling that one is important to a significant other is probably essential to the development of a feeling of self-worth" (p. 146). He also found that extreme parental indifference is associated with lowered self-esteem in the child and, in fact, seems to be even more harmful than punitive parental reactions.

On the other hand, Coopersmith (1967) found that treatment with concern, affection and attention appears to enhance self-appraisals. In addition, high self-esteem is more likely to develop where there is mutual support among siblings than where they are distant or antagonistic.

Coopersmith (1967) concluded that self-judgments result from combinations of successes, aspirations, values, and defenses. Thus, "experiences of success lead to expectations of success and aspirations mirror these expectations" (p. 147).

In summary, the majority of past researchers have agreed upon the following basic assumptions concerning self-esteem:

1.) During the course of development the individual comes to form a stabilized evaluation of himself which remains fairly constant and resistant to change.

2.) Self-esteem is developed through learning as a result of past favorable and unfavorable experiences.

3.) Self-esteem is considered to be a major factor in determining behavior.

4.) Self-esteem is associated with personal satisfaction and effective functioning.

SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SELF-ESTEEM

According to Wylie (1961), various researchers have reported conflicting results when investigating achievement and self-esteem. Studies by Fiedler, et al., (1958) and by Turner and Vanderlippe (1958) found no relationship between self-esteem and grade point average. However, Sears (1970) found high self-esteem to be significantly associated with reading and arithmetic achievement, and both Caplin (1969) and Simon and Simon (1975) found significant positive relationships between the self-concept and academic achievement in the intermediate elementary grades. Likewise, Coopersmith (1959, 1967) found that self-esteem correlated with Iowa Achievement Test scores when sociometric status was held constant. He also reported that self-esteem was related to both subjective grade point averages and to the frequency of problems including academic stresses and failures. Self-esteem was also shown to be positively correlated with intelligence, performance under stress and affect scores revealed by the analysis of need for achievement(Coopersmith, 1962).

Landis (1972) used the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory to successfully discriminate between high and low achievers. Likewise, Frerichs (1971) found that disadvantaged students with higher self-esteem show a higher reading level and gain more academic success.

Wattenberg and Clifford (1964) found that when intellectual ability is controlled, self-concept is a basic causal factor in determining achievement level in school. More specifically, Wattenberg and Clifford (1962) found the self-concept to have a predictive causal effect on reading and to be a better predictor of reading achievement than I.Q.

Brookover, et al., (1962) in studying adolescents, found that self-concept significantly affected achievement and was a functionally limiting factor in school achievement.

Scott (1975) suggested that twenty-five per cent of the variation in scholastic achievement is attributable to one's academic self-concept. She also cited evidence indicating that students' self-concepts "appear to be more closely associated with teacher evaluations of scholastic performance than with standardized measures of achievement" (p. 2-3).

Felker and Stanwyck (1971) investigated the self-concept in relation to specific successes and failures in academic tasks. They found that children with high self-concepts tend to make more positively loaded self-directed statements than those with low self-concepts. These results were found to be more related to the general self-concept than to the perceptions of performance on a specific task. This was seen to support the contentions that individuals behave in ways which maintain their level of self-concept

and overt behavior. This study also served to direct attention to behavioral manifestations in addition to inner perceptions in the development of the self-concept.

Although self-esteem and achievement in school have been shown to be correlated, it has not been adequately determined whether academic success or failure effects the self-esteem of the young school-aged child or whether the pre-existing self-esteem effects school achievement. In order to investigate this dilemma, a longitudinal study should be conducted. It would be necessary to devise a self-esteem scale which is administerable to preschool children, so that the effect of their subsequent academic successes and failures upon their self-esteem could be determined and, possibly a pattern of cause-and-effect may emerge.

It is likely that the relationship between self-esteem and achievement is interactional and not a clear-cut cause-and-effect. Also, it has been shown that the two variables do not have a one-to-one correlation and exceptions do arise (Coopersmith, 1959). However, knowing the basic rules which determine self-esteem in relation to academic achievement would aid in understanding the child who does not follow the expected pattern. In addition, changing one variable, esteem or achievement, is likely to result in a change of the other. Knowing the mechanisms involved in how and when such changes could be made would seem to be very valuable for the teacher

working with children in the classroom.

A program known as IMPACT, where elementary school teachers attended a one-year program directed at humanizing and individualizing the activities of the classroom to encourage creativity and freedom of expression, has been shown to produce children with significantly higher self-esteem than those with teachers not attending such a program (Trowbridge, 1970). However, these results were more marked in disadvantaged areas than in other areas. Trowbridge has offered two hypotheses to explain the success of this program: 1.) Teachers with high self-esteem transfer this feeling to their students, whose self-worth increases; 2.) The teacher's behavior in the teaching activity improves the child's concept of himself, where Trowbridge gives the example of encouragement of divergent and evaluative thinking causing the child's self-esteem to "grow". I would like to suggest a third hypothesis: The teacher's individualized program of treating each child as a worthwhile individual who is allowed to freely express, create and produce valuable and accepted signs of his worth generates a higher valued self in each child.

Through the use of behavior modification, Hauserman, et. al., (1974) were able to raise the self-concept scores of children with previously negative self-concepts. The elicitation of positive self-statements and social reinforcers were used to accomplish the increase of self-esteem which was

maintained for at least a month.

In studying self-perceptions of children as related to self, social, family and school situations, Ugent (1971) found that children in all grade levels and at all achievement levels perceive themselves most negatively within the school situation. He, therefore, concluded that the school situation in comparison with other areas is producing the greatest amount of anxiety and frustration in children. This description is similar to the ideas of Holt (1964) who views the school as a threatening, fearful and anxious situation in each child's life. These implications suggest that changes are needed in our present system of schooling.

Torshen, et al., (1974) theorized that "if students' concepts of themselves are influenced by their experiences in school, the students may develop their concepts of themselves as students during their first few years in school" (p. 2) and greatly stressed the need for research in this area using young children.

The bulk of the research in self-esteem has focussed on the older child and relatively few studies have investigated self-esteem in children under ten years of age. Thus, Torshen, et al., (1974) have concluded that "because most of the research involving students' self-concepts has been conducted in fifth and subsequent grades, rather little is known about interactions between students' self-concepts and their

school experiences in the early grades" (p. 2).

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND SELF-ESTEEM

Positive relationships between self-regard and sociometric status have also been demonstrated. Persons with low self-esteem were found to have poorer social relationships with both their peers and siblings (Wylie, 1961). Behavioral demonstration of self-esteem, but not subjective experiences of esteem, were found to be associated with acceptance by peers in fifth graders (Coopersmith, 1967). Williams and Cole (1968) found that one's self-esteem was significantly related to the appraisal of his peer group in sixth graders as measured by a sociometric questionnaire, where classmates select each other for roles. They further postulated that communication from the peer group may constitute one of the more decisive determinants of both self-evaluations and of achievement. Sears (1963), studying fifth grade children, found self-esteem (especially the self-esteem of children with lower ability,) to be influenced by evaluative opinions of teachers and peers. She concluded that "perceptions or opinions about a child are reflected in covert or overt behavior toward him. Such behaviors, probably repeated many times during the school year, constitute a modifying influence of potential power for change in the child's development." (p. 283)

Brookover, et al., (1962, 1965, 1967,) using seventh grades in a longitudinal study, found that self-perceptions were acquired through interactions with significant others who hold expectations of the student as a learner. With junior high school students, only parents, but not teachers or counselors, were found to be "significant others". As students progressed from eighth to tenth grade, opinions of peers increased its significance and eventually became more important than parents' attitudes. Brookover, et al., concluded that "self-concept of academic ability is an intervening factor between the perceived evaluation of others and performance" (1965, p. 194).

Haubner (1973) found that teachers did not accurately estimate their students' self-esteem scores and concluded that if judgments are to be made as to how to best fulfill the needs of students in relationship to their self-esteem, more information will have to be provided for the teacher.

SEX DIFFERENCES IN SELF-ESTEEM

The literature reveals conflicting data concerning sex differences.

In measuring the self-esteem of 1,748 children, Coopersmith (1967) found no significant sex differences, while Engel (1959) also found no sex differences when measuring the stability of the self-concept.

Kimball (1972), using a sample of 8,000 fourth through eighth graders, found a sex difference in self-esteem scores with males scoring higher than females.

Cotler and Palmer (1970) found that fourth, fifth and sixth grade girls view themselves more positively if they are high achievers and if they have higher intelligence. However, boys of this age were found to have self-ratings which are unrelated to achievement or IQ measures. The authors cite a study by Fink who recorded opposite trends in sex differences using high school students.

Sears (1963) also found relationships to the self-concepts of fifth and sixth graders to differ greatly between sex-ability groups. She found boys of superior ability had a high relationship between self-concept and achievement tests, a moderate relationship between self-concept and teacher rating and little relationship between self-concept

and peer nomination. On the other hand, boys of average ability showed no relationship between self-concept and achievement scores, but a high relationship between self-concept and teacher judgments. Girls of both ability groups showed no relationship between self-concept and achievement scores, but a moderate relationship between self-concept and teacher and peer judgments.

Ugent (1971), studying fourth, seventh and tenth graders, and Simon and Simon (1975), studying fifth graders, both found that all had self-esteems which correlated with their achievement regardless of their sex. On the other hand, Campbell (1967), studying fourth through sixth graders, found that boys had a higher relationship between self-esteem and achievement scores than girls, but girls scored higher on the school self-esteem sub-scale. Simon and Simon (1975) suggest that variant findings concerning the existence of sex differences in the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement may be due to various sociological characteristics of different schools and/or various personality characteristics of their student bodies and teachers.

SELF-ESTEEM MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

Various instruments have been used throughout the literature to measure self-esteem and self-concept in children and adults. In searching for a device usable with elementary school children, Trowbridge (1970) studied previous reviews and pretested three instruments. She concluded that Coopersmith's "Self-esteem Inventory" (SEI) (1967) had the largest available body of research data and the most complete validation studies.

Likewise, Robinson, et al., (1969) concluded that most measures of self-esteem have little more than face-validation, but Coopersmith's SEI "has been used in extensive research and found to have considerable validity" (p. 59).

The SEI is a self-report inventory where the child marks "Like Me" or "Unlike Me" to fifty statements, such as, "I get upset easily when I'm scolded" and "I'm popular with kids my own age".

Coopersmith (1967) reported a test-retest reliability of .88 after a five-week interval with a sample of 30 fifth grade children and one of .70 after three years with a different sample of fifty-six.

SUMMARY OF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-concept and self-esteem have been regarded as integral constructs in most personality theories. Self-esteem has been shown to be related to effective functioning and to positive relationships. The development of self-esteem has been assumed to result from experiences of success and failure and from the appraisals of significant others and has been shown to become stabilized prior to middle childhood.

Self-esteem has been shown to be related to school experiences. Various researchers have confirmed the positive relationship between scholastic achievement and self-esteem. However, little investigation of this relationship with primary grade children has been undertaken. Self-esteem has been found to be related to peer acceptance, but again, no research with young children has been attempted. Teacher's attitudes have not proven related to self-esteem in older students but no studies have included younger subjects. The investigation of sex differences in self-esteem has yielded conflicting results which may only be clarified through further research. In measuring self-esteem, Coopersmith's SEI has been shown to be the most valid device available for school-aged children.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The present investigation of the relationship between the development of self-esteem and early school experiences focussed on academic achievement and teacher and peer evaluative attitudes. The examination of the relationship between self-esteem and academic successes and failures was four-fold. Achievement was viewed in terms of both objective test scores and subjective group labels. These two measurements were further differentiated as to area of achievement, reading or math.

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1.) Self-esteem does not vary among subjective reading placement levels in second graders.

2.) Self-esteem does not vary among subjective math placement levels in second graders.

3.) Self-esteem is not related to objective reading achievement in second grade.

4.) Self-esteem is not related to objective math achievement in second grade.

5.) Self-esteem is not related to the teacher's attitude toward the second grade student.

6.) Self-esteem is not related to the popularity among peers in second graders.

SUBJECTS

The fifty-nine subjects (Ss) included thirty-eight boys and twenty-one girls. The Ss comprised the three second grade classrooms of a public elementary school in a middle class suburban area of a large mid-western metropolitan city. The ages ranged between seven years-six months and eight years-four months.

MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

The following instruments were utilized: Coopersmith's Self-esteem Inventory (SEI); Stanford Achievement Test; an unpublished teacher questionnaire, measuring subjective academic placement and evaluative attitude; and an unpublished sociometric rating scale.

Measuring Self-esteem

Coopersmith's (1967) SEI, a self-report inventory where the child marks "Like Me" or "Unlike Me" to fifty statements, has demonstrated a test-retest reliability of .88 for a sample of thirty fifth graders after an interval of five weeks and .70 for a different sample of fifty-six students after a three-year interval (Coopersmith, 1967). Support for the validity of the SEI comes from a wide variety of correlational studies (Coopersmith, 1959, 1962, 1967, 1968; Simon and Simon, 1975; etc.) and has been endorsed by both Trowbridge (1970) and Robinson (1969) as the most valid self-esteem measure available.

On this basis of reported validity, the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory was selected to measure self-esteem. In order to verify the feasibility of using the SEI on younger children, a pretest was undertaken. A small group of five second graders was given the SEI orally. The administration proved successful. The Ss were able to follow directions,

comprehend the statements, and complete the full questionnaire at one sitting. The fifty-item questionnaire yields scores ranging from 0 to 100, indicating low to high self-esteem.

Measuring Academic Achievement

Objective reading and math achievement were measured by the Stanford Achievement Test-Primary 2A, 1973 Edition. Separate reading and math scores indicated each S's grade level attainment ranging from 1.0 to 7.0.

Academic placement was rated by the teacher's subjective placement of each S into an ability group. Reading and math were separately rated as above average, average, or below average. Each S's reading rating was based on the assigned reading group which he attended daily. At the beginning of the year, the teachers divided all second graders into three reading groups, comprised of approximately the lowest third, the middle third, and the highest third of the achievers in reading on the basis of achievement tests, previous achievement records and teacher evaluations. Each group remained relatively stable throughout the school year. Each S's math rating was based on the quality of math achievement the teacher perceived him to accomplish without actual daily group labels.

Measuring Evaluative Attitudes of Significant Others

Teacher attitudes were measured by a teacher questionnaire (see Appendix B asking her to rate each S according to

degree of likeability of the S. Teacher ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 5, extremely hard to like to extremely easy to like. To provide insight into the teacher's reasons for liking or disliking a child, the teachers were asked to indicate which factors helped determine their rating choice. The following factors: physical appearance, physical ability, academic ability, intelligence, personal habits, personality characteristics, work habits, and behavior in school, were selected on the basis of Torshen, et al., (1974) Self-Concept Inventory and other variables perceived as important by this examiner (E), as a result of years of experience with teachers and young children. An open-ended category of Other (Please explain) was also included so that any previously unmentioned variables could be added.

Peer attitudes were measured by a sociometric questionnaire (see Appendix C,) asking each S to name classmates he would like and would not like to have as partners on a field trip. Each time a child is mentioned as being desired as a partner, he receives a +1. Each time he is mentioned as <u>not</u> being wanted, he receives a -1. The resulting total of all ratings represents his relative peer status and can range from the least popular, -20, to the most popular, +20.

PROCEDURE

The SEI was administered orally to three classroom groups separately by the same E. A number coding system rather than names of the Ss was used to insure confidentiality (see Appendix A for instructions). The Stanford Achievement Tests were administered as a school-wide procedure by the individual classroom teacher. The sociometric questionnaire was also administered by the individual teacher at a separate sitting. Teachers were asked to complete the teacher questionnaire consisting of subjective academic placements in reading and math and of teacher attitude ratings and considerations.

The relationship between self-esteem and subjective academic placement was examined through analysis of variance with unequal samples. A separate analysis of variance was conducted for reading placement and for math placement.

Pearson Product Moment Correlations were computed to determine the relationships between the following variables: self-esteem and objective reading achievement; self-esteem and objective math achievement; self-esteem and teacher opinion; and, self-esteem and peer rating.

SUMMARY OF METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The investigation of the relationship between the development of self-esteem and school experiences of academic achievement and peer and teacher opinions included fifty-nine second grade Ss. Self-esteem was measured by Coopersmith's SEI administered orally to each of three classrooms. Objective achievement in reading and math were measured by the administration of the standardized Stanford Achievement Test. Subjective academic achievement was measured by the teacher's placement of each S in a group labeled above average, average and below average for reading and math separately. Attitudes of significant others were measured by unpublished rating scales. Teachers were asked to rate the likeability of the Ss on a 1 to 5 scale. Peers were asked to choose classmates as partners yielding a positive or negative peer popularity score. The resulting data were analyzed by analysis of variance using self-esteem and subjective academic placements separately for reading and math and by computing Pearson Product Moment Correlations between self-esteem and the following: objective reading achievement, objective math achievement, teacher rating and peer rating.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Previous investigations of the development of self-esteem have utilized post hoc reasoning, testing older Ss and infering cause and effect at an earlier age from the results of the older Ss. The present study has attempted to directly study the younger S to establish the relationship between the development of self-esteem and the early school experiences of academic achievement and attitude of others (see Table 1).

Self-esteem

The SEI scores ranged from 34 to 98 with an overall mean of 73.6, (SD=14.05). The mean for the thirty-eight boys was 74.6, (SD=13.69,) and for the twenty-one girls was 71.8, (SD=14.84,) (see Table 1). These scores did not prove to be significantly different (t=.74, 57df,) (see Table 2).

Achievement

Objective achievement scores ranged from 1.5 to 7.0 with a mean of 3.7 (SD=1.43) for reading and 3.1 (SD=.91) for math (see Table 1). Subjective placements for reading correlated .78 ($p<.01$, 57df) with objective test scores and subjective placements for math correlated .66 ($p<.01$, 57df) with objective test scores.

TABLE 1. RAW DATA RESULTS OF MEASURING DEVICES (N=59)

S	Sex	SEI Score	Reading Score		Math Score		Teacher Attitude	Peer Rating
			Sbj	Obj	Sbj	Obj		
1	M	52	aa	5.4	a	3.5	2	-1
2	M	64	ba	3.2	a	3.0	2	0
3	M	68	aa	7.0	aa	5.1	3	-4
4	F	76	aa	4.9	aa	3.7	3	+2
5	M	90	aa	7.0	aa	5.5	5	+3
6	M	70	a	3.9	aa	3.7	4	+5
7	M	62	aa	4.5	aa	4.8	5	0
8	M	78	ba	1.8	a	3.0	3	-5
9	M	64	ba	2.8	a	3.3	4	-1
10	M	82	a	3.5	ba	3.3	3	+1
11	F	70	a	4.7	a	3.3	5	0
12	F	68	ba	2.6	a	3.3	2	-2
13	M	98	aa	5.8	aa	5.1	3	+2
14	F	74	aa	4.6	aa	3.5	4	+4
15	M	54	a	5.1	a	2.5	3	-4
16	M	86	aa	4.0	aa	3.3	1	0
17	M	62	a	2.0	a	2.4	3	+2
18	F	34	aa	6.2	aa	3.0	4	+2
19	M	96	a	3.0	a	2.9	2	-1
20	M	74	a	2.6	a	3.5	3	+5
21	M	72	a	2.2	a	2.1	4	0
22	M	66	ba	2.3	a	3.4	3	-5
23	F	64	aa	5.4	aa	3.1	2	-5
24	M	78	ba	2.1	ba	1.7	5	-2
25	M	80	aa	5.4	aa	3.4	4	+3
26	M	82	a	3.6	a	3.8	4	0
27	F	60	aa	4.7	aa	2.9	4	+1
28	M	64	a	4.7	a	2.6	2	+1
29	F	46	ba	2.1	a	2.9	3	-3
30	M	84	a	2.3	a	2.2	3	0
31	F	76	a	2.6	a	3.7	5	+1
32	F	88	a	3.5	a	3.3	5	-1
33	M	92	a	3.3	a	2.3	2	+1
34	M	90	a	5.4	a	3.8	4	0
35	M	60	aa	4.6	aa	3.3	4	0

Key: SEI = Self-esteem Score
Sbj = Subjective Score
Obj = Objective Score
aa = Above Average
a = Average
ba = Below Average

(continued)

TABLE 1. (Continued)

S	Sex	SEI Score	Reading Score Sbj	Reading Score Obj	Math Score Sbj	Math Score Obj	Teacher Attitude	Peer Rating
36	M	70	a	3.7	a	3.3	5	+2
37	F	66	a	4.0	a	3.4	1	-2
38	M	80	aa	5.1	a	4.4	3	-4
39	M	68	ba	2.6	a	2.9	2	+1
40	F	60	a	4.1	a	2.8	2	-2
41	F	82	aa	5.8	aa	3.8	4	+1
42	F	76	aa	4.8	a	3.1	3	0
43	M	94	aa	4.7	aa	4.4	3	0
44	F	88	aa	4.5	aa	3.4	4	-1
45	M	66	ba	2.1	ba	1.9	2	-1
46	M	80	a	2.5	a	1.7	3	-1
47	M	92	ba	3.3	a	2.7	3	+1
48	F	94	a	2.9	a	3.3	4	+2
49	F	74	a	2.6	a	3.6	5	+3
50	F	74	ba	1.9	ba	2.2	4	+3
51	M	42	a	3.0	a	2.8	4	+3
52	F	90	aa	4.3	aa	3.5	5	+3
53	M	78	ba	2.6	ba	2.3	1	-1
54	M	96	aa	3.4	aa	3.5	3	+3
55	F	60	ba	2.4	ba	1.9	3	-10
56	F	88	aa	4.7	aa	4.1	5	+3
57	M	64	ba	2.6	a	2.4	3	0
58	M	80	ba	1.5	ba	1.8	3	-5
59	M	58	a	2.9	a	2.7	4	+2

	Mean	SD
SEI Score	73.60	14.05
Objective Reading	3.70	1.43
Objective Math	3.10	.91
Teacher Attitude	2.34	1.11
Peer Rating	1.58	1.46

TABLE 2. SELF-ESTEEM: COMPARISON OF SEXES

	Boys (N=38)	Girls (N=21)
Total	2836	1508
Mean	74.63	71.81
Variation	187.48	220.36
Standard Deviation	13.69	14.84

T Test Values 0.74 57df

Attitudes of Others

The teacher's liking score ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 5 with a mean of 2.34, (SD=1.11). The peer liking score ranged from least popular of -10 to most popular of +5 with a mean of 1.58, (SD=1.46,) (see Table 1).

STATISTICAL RESULTS

Null Hypothesis I: Self-esteem does not vary among subjective reading placement levels in second graders.

Analysis of variance was conducted to test the independence of self-esteem scores between achievement placement levels in reading (see Table 3). The F ratio of .885 was found to be not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Null Hypothesis II: Self-esteem does not vary among subjective math placement levels in second graders.

Analysis of variance was also conducted between self-esteem and math placement (see Table 4). The F ratio of .791 proved not significant and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Null Hypothesis III: Self-esteem is not related to objective reading achievement in second grade.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed between self-esteem and objective reading achievement scores, (see Table 5). A correlation of .05 proved not significant and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Null Hypothesis IV: Self-esteem is not related to objective math achievement in second grade.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation between self-esteem and math achievement scores proved significant, (r=.26,

TABLE 3. SELF-ESTEEM AND READING PLACEMENT (ANOVA WITH UNEQUAL GROUPS)

Reading Placement	Mean Self-esteem
Above Average	76.09
Average	73.91
Below Average	69.73

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F
Between Groups	357.27	2	178.64	.885
Within Groups	11,094.53	55	201.72	n.s.

TABLE 4. SELF-ESTEEM AND MATH PLACEMENT (ANOVA WITH UNEQUAL GROUPS)

Math Placement	Mean Self-esteem
Above Average	76.84
Average	71.69
Below Average	74.00

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F
Between Groups	320.33	2	160.16	.791
Within Groups	11,131.47	55	202.39	n.s.

TABLE 5. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND SCHOOL EXPERIENCE VARIABLES (PEARSON PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION n=59)

	Self-esteem
Objective Reading Achievement	.05
Objective Math Achievement	.26*
Teacher Attitude	.08
Sociometric Score	.01

*Significant at .05 level, 47df

$p<.05$, 57df,) (see Table 5). The null hypothesis was rejected.

Null Hypothesis V: Self-esteem is not related to the teacher's attitude toward the second grade student.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .08 between self-esteem and teacher rating proved not significant, (see Table 5,) and the null hypothesis was accepted. However, when correlations for boys and girls are computed separately, the relationship for girls proves significant ($r=.43$, $p<.05$, 19df,) (see Table 6).

Null Hypothesis VI: Self-esteem is not related to the popularity among peers in second graders.

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation of .01 between self-esteem and peer rating proved not significant, (see Table 5). The null hypothesis was accepted.

TABLE 6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND TEACHER ATTITUDE--SEX DIFFERENCES (PEARSON PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION)

Teacher Attitude	Self-esteem
Total Group (n=59)	.08
Boys	-.11
Girls	.43*

*Significant at .05 level, 19df

DISCUSSION

In second grade students, only objective math achievement is related to self-esteem scores. Other types of achievement do not appear to be related. However, the significant correlation between self-esteem and math achievement gives no information as to which is, indeed, the cause and effect. To determine whether scoring high in math results in the child valuing himself more or whether children with high self-esteem do better in math, it is necessary to conduct a longitudinal study beginning before the child enters school.

The results of the present study fail to support the findings of Wattenberg and Clifford (1962) who indicated that self-concept has a predictive causal effect on reading achievement. However, the present results tend to support the findings of Kifer cited by Scott (1975) that school achievement has a cumulative effect on the self-concept. In the present study, only objective math achievement showed a relationship to self-esteem, whereas in studies with older children who had more school experiences, all types of achievement appear to be related to self-esteem (Sears, 1970; Caplin, 1969; Simon and Simon, 1975; Coopersmith, 1967; etc.)

It is possible to speculate why self-esteem was not related to all measures of achievement in second graders.

Perhaps, children in second grade have not had enough experiences to adequately evaluate situations and to relate them to an evaluation of the self. Perhaps, because in primary grades the ability span is relatively small and most activities are teacher directed with a high level of expected success, the slower child is not as obvious and is not as aware of his inabilities as an older child who is expected to work independently. Or perhaps, as Scott (1975) suggests, the self-concept may result as a function of maturation and these second graders have not yet "matured".

For girls, but not for boys, liking by the teacher is related to self-esteem scores. It would appear that whether or not a teacher likes a child is more important to girls than to boys. Thus, for girls being valued by the teacher appears to strengthen their own self-appraisals, but such an effect is not present for boys. For girls, self-esteem is related to their teacher's indicating that she considers physical appearance ($r=.55$, $p<.01$, 19df) and work habits ($r=.44$, $p<.01$, 19df) in forming her opinions of them. For boys, self-esteem is related to their teacher's indicating that she considers intelligence ($r=.38$, $p<.05$, 36df) in forming her opinion of them. Therefore, girls who look nice, who follow directions and work hard for the teacher are liked by the teacher and, in turn, feel good about themselves. On the other hand, boys don't particularly care how the teacher feels

about them but they feel better about themselves if the teacher regards them as intelligent. It would be interesting to find how accurately the teacher's judgment of intelligence corresponded to actual intelligence.

It is possible that the increased maturity of girls (about one-half to one year ahead of boys at this age) may give them more experiential feedback on which to base realistic self-appraisals. Also, it is possible that boys are less concerned with teacher's evaluations because they have other areas in which to gain attention, such as physical sports or acting-out, as a behavior problem. Girls don't have these options. Further study is needed into both the effect of teacher's attitudes on self-esteem and the extent of sex differences in the development of self-esteem.

It would appear that at the second grade level, peer acceptance does not play an important role in the development of self-esteem. However, before such a conclusion can be reached, further investigation is suggested. It is possible that the sociometric measure used in the present study may not have been sensitive enough to detect acceptance or rejection by peers. In fact, one teacher reported that children absent on the day of the sociometric administration were not selected by their classmates. This may indicate either a shortcoming in the measuring device or the superficiality of social relationships at this age. The development of a

standardized sociometric measure for young children would make further investigation possible.

The development of self-esteem appears to be more complicated than directly resulting from academic experiences of success and failure and from opinions of others at school. Other factors are intervening. Some possibilities may be importance and value of educational attainment, perception of authority figures, extent of successes outside school, sexual role expectancies, adequacy of home life, etc. It is suggested that further investigation of the development of self-esteem in young children be undertaken. The most beneficial type of research would be a longitudinal study begun before the child enters school and continuing through the middle grades. However, a standardized group test of self-esteem for preschoolers does not exist. In order to carry out further research, it will be necessary to develop an adequate measuring device of self-esteem to use in testing young pre-readers.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In second graders, self-esteem was found to be related to objective math achievement only. Subjective math placement and subjective and objective reading achievement were not proven to be related to self-esteem. Self-esteem was related to teacher opinion for girls only. Furthermore, girls' self-esteem was related to the teacher's considering physical appearance and work habits as a basis of liking them. Boys' self-esteem was unrelated to their teacher's opinion of them, but was related to her considering intelligence as a basis of liking them. Peer opinion was not significantly related to self-esteem for either sex.

In order to gain more insight into the development of self-esteem, it is imperative that further research be undertaken.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Self-esteem is considered to be developed during the early years as a result of experiences of success and failure and of appraisals of significant others, and to become stabilized prior to middle childhood. However, research verifying these assumptions has not yet been conducted using young school-aged children as subjects.

The present study attempted to explore the development of self-esteem at one level of the primary grade span, namely second, in relation to subjective and objective reading and math achievement, teacher attitude and peer opinion.

A review of the literature revealed self-esteem to be regarded as an integral construct in most personality theories. Self-esteem has been shown to be related to effective functioning and to positive interpersonal relationships.

Self-esteem has been shown to be related to school experiences. Various researchers have confirmed the positive relationship between scholastic achievement and self-esteem. However, little investigation of this relationship with primary grade children has been undertaken. Self-esteem has been found to be related to peer acceptance, but again no

research with young children has been attempted. Teacher's attitudes have not proven related to self-esteem in older students but no studies have included younger subjects. The investigation of sex differences in self-esteem has yielded conflicting results which may only be clarified through further research. In measuring self-esteem, Coopersmith's SEI has been shown to be the most valid device available for school-aged children.

The present investigation of the relationship between the development of self-esteem and school experiences of academic achievement and peer and teacher opinions included fifty-nine second grade Ss. Self-esteem was measured by Coopersmith's SEI administered orally to each of the three classrooms. Objective achievement in reading and math were measured by the administration of the standardized Stanford Achievement Test. Subjective academic achievement was measured by the teacher's placement of each S in a group labeled above average, average and below average for reading and math separately. Attitudes of significant others were measured by unpublished rating scales. Teachers were asked to rate the likeability of the Ss on a 1 to 5 scale. Peers were asked to choose classmates as partners yielding a positive or negative peer popularity score. The resulting data were analyzed by analysis of variance using self-esteem and subjective academic placements separately for reading and

math and by computing Pearson Product Moment Correlations between self-esteem and the following: objective reading achievement, objective math achievement, teacher rating and peer rating.

Analysis of the results revealed that, in second graders, self-esteem was related to objective math achievement only with a correlation of .26. Subjective math placement and subjective and objective reading achievement were not proven to be related to self-esteem with an F ratio of .791 and .885 and a correlation of .05, respectively. Teacher's opinion was related to self-esteem for girls only with a correlation of.43. The correlations for self-esteem and teacher's opinion with the total group and for boys were .08 and -.11, respectively, proving not significant. Peer opinion was not significantly related to self-esteem with a correlation of .01.

It was concluded that the development of self-esteem appears to be more complicated than directly resulting from academic experiences of success and failure and from opinions of significant others at school. It was suggested that further investigation of the development of self-esteem in young children be undertaken. Particularly important would be longitudinal studies beginning before children enter school and continuing throughout the primary grades.

The present study has shed further light on the implications of sex differences in the development of self-esteem. For girls, S's self-esteem was related to the indication of the

teacher that she consider the S's physical appearance and work habits in forming her opinion of the S, with correlations of .55 and .44, respectively. For boy Ss, self-esteem was related to the indication of the teacher that she consider the S's intelligence in forming her opinion of the S with a correlation of .38. It was concluded that further study is needed into both the effect of teacher's attitudes on self-esteem and the extent of sex differences in the development of self-esteem.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

TEACHER INFORMATION SHEET

Code Numbers

Please list each student below next to a code number. You will be the only one to know the code. I will see only the numbers assigned. Check to be sure that all materials which each student receives have matching code numbers:

		Sociometric Scores	Total
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			
21.			
22.			

(Continued)

Directions for Sociometric Test

Hand out sociometric test. Read statements to the children and ask them to fill in the blanks. A list of all the children's names on the blackboard will help the students to spell their choices independently. Collect the tests and score them as follows:

Each time a child is mentioned in #1 (would like as partner), place a plus next to his name on this sheet.

Each time a child is mentioned in #2 (would not like as partner), place a minus next to his name.

After all papers have been scored, add the plusses and minuses and place the result in the total column. Transfer this total to #5. Sociometric score on the properly coded information sheet. Example: -++-- equals -1.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Code number_____ M___ F___ Age: ____years ____months

1. How would you describe this child's achievement in reading?

   Above average____ Average____ Below average____

2. How would you describe this child's achievement in math?

   Above average____ Average____ Below average____

3. How would you describe your feelings toward this child?

Extremely hard to like				Extremely easy to like
1	2	3	4	5

4. What factors helped determine your choice in #3?

_____Physical appearance
_____Physical ability
_____Academic ability
_____Intelligence
_____Personal habits
_____Personality characteristics
_____Work habits
_____Behavior in school
_____Other (Please explain)

5. Sociometric score _____.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

SOCIOMETRIC MEASURE

Name _____ Code_____

1. Name 2 people in this class you would like as your partners on a field trip:

_____ _____

2. Name 2 people in this class you would <u>not</u> like as your partners on a field trip:

_____ _____

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY

M F _____

	Like Me	Unlike Me
Example: I'm a hard worker.		
1. I spend a lot of time day-dreaming.		
2. I'm pretty sure of myself.		
3. I often wish I were someone else.		
4. I'm easy to like.		
5. My parents and I have a lot of fun together.		
6. I find it very hard to talk in front of the class.		
7. I wish I were younger.		
8. There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could.		
9. I can make up my mind without too much trouble.		
10. I'm a lot of fun to be with.		
11. I get upset easily at home.		
12. I'm proud of my school work.		
13. Someone always has to tell me what to do.		
14. It takes me a long time to get use to anything new.		

		Like Me	Unlike Me
15.	I'm often sorry for the things I do.		
16.	I'm popular with kids my own age.		
17.	My parents usually consider my feelings.		
18.	I'm doing the best work that I can.		
19.	I give in very easily.		
20.	I can usually take care of myself.		
21.	I'm pretty happy.		
22.	I would rather play with children younger than I.		
23.	My parents expect too much of me.		
24.	I like to be called on in class.		
25.	I understand myself.		
26.	It's pretty tough to be me.		
27.	Things are all mixed up in my life.		
28.	Kids usually follow my ideas.		
29.	No one pays much attention to me at home.		
30.	I'm not doing as well in school as I'd like to.		
31.	I can make up my mind and stick to it.		
32.	I really don't like being a boy/ girl (whichever you are).		
33.	I have a low opinion of myself.		
34.	I don't like to be with other people.		

		Like Me	Unlike Me
35.	There are many times when I'd like to leave home.		
36.	I often feel upset in school.		
37.	I often feel ashamed of myself.		
38.	I'm not as nice looking as most people.		
39.	If I have something to say, I usually say it.		
40.	Kids pick on me very often.		
41.	My parents understand me.		
42.	My teacher makes me feel I'm not good enough.		
43.	I don't care what happens to me.		
44.	I'm a failure.		
45.	I get upset easily when I'm scolded.		
46.	Most people are better liked than I am.		
47.	I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me.		
48.	I often get discouraged in school.		
49.	Things usually don't bother me.		
50.	I can't be depended upon.		

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Anita S. Ugent has been read and approved by the following Committee:

Dr. Anne M. Juhasz, Chairman
Professor, Educational Foundations, Loyola

Dr. Jack Kavanagh
Assistant Professor, Educational Foundations, Loyola

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Nov 5 1975
Date

Anne M. Juhasz
Director's Signature